

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 0036

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, ENRG, MX

SUBJ: MEXICAN MEMBERSHIP IN OPEC, THE TRADE REFORM ACT, AND GSP

REF: MEXICO 10825

1. SUMMARY: REPORTS THAT MEXICO ACTIVELY SEEKING EARLY OPEC MEMBERSHIP CIRCULATING HERE IN RECENT DAYS WERE DENIED BY SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY FLORES DE LA PENA, LEAVING IMPORTANT ISSUE MEXICAN MEMBERSHIP UNCERTAIN. LARGELY BECAUSE OF OPEC ISSUE, MEXICAN PRESS CONTINUES TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF TRADE REFORM ACT, WHICH IS SEEN GENERALLY BY MEDIA AS CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF TLATELOLCO, CERDS, AND NEW DIALOGUE. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL AND CONTINUING ASSUMPTION THAT MEXIC MOVING TOWARD EARLY OPEC MEMBERSHIP CULMINATED IN MEXICAN MEDIA REPORTS OVER NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY THAT MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO U.S. JOSE JUAN DE OLLOQUI HAD TRAVELED TO KUWAIT TO SEEK FULL OPEC MEMBERSHIP STATUS FOR MEXICO. THIS REPORT HAS NOW BEEN STRONGLY DENIED BY SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY HORACIO FLORES DE LA PENA (KNOWN, INCIDENTALLY, PERSONALLY TO FAVOR OPEC MEMBERSHIP).
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IN HIS DENIAL THAT MEXICO WAS SEEKING OPEC MEMBERSHIP AT THIS

TIME, FLORES CITED DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST BETWEEN OPEC COUNTRIES AND MEXICO, AND OFFERED SOME SURPRISINGLY CRITICAL AND IMPOLOTIC OBSERVATIONS ON THE FAILURE OF SOME OPEC COUNTRIES TO UTILIZE THEIR NEW WEALTH TO BETTER THE LIVES OF THEIR IMPOVERISHED CITIZENRY. SECRETARY FLORES EMPHASIZED THAT MEXICO NEEDS TIME TO CONSIDER MERITS OF OPEC MEMBERSHIP, ADDING THAT MEXICO'S PETROLEUM SITUATION DIFFERS FROM OPEC COUNTRIES IN THAT " MEXICO OWNS IT OILFIELDS, THE OTHERS DO NOT".

3. MEANWHILE, STRONG CRITICISM OF THE OPEC AND OTHER RESTRICTIVE ASPECTS RECENTLY-PASSED TRA CONTINUES IN MEXICAN PRESS. ALMOST EVERY MEXICAN DAILY HAS EXPRESSED CRITICISM TO VARYING DEGREE, AND HAS FRONT-PAGED SUCH ITEMS AS HIGHLY CRITICAL COMMENTS FROM VENEZUELA, ECUADOR AND OTHER LA COUNTRIES ON GSP-OPEC AND OTHER ASPECTS OF TRA. LOCAL AMERICAN AMCHAM OFFICIAL WHO REPORTEDLY CRITICIZED TRA AS "RESTRICTING FREE TRADE" RECEIVED BANNER COVERAGE.

4. COMMENT: QUESTION MEXICAN MEMBERSHIP OPEC IS OBVIOUSLY HIGHLY SENSITIVE HERE AT THIS TIME. EMBASSY NOT IN POSITION TO GAUGE FULLY IMPORTANCE TO U.S. OF MEXICO JOINING OR NOT JOINING OPEC. IF IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US THAT MEXICO STAY OUT, THEN FLURRY, REPORTED PARA 2 ABOVE, MAKES EVEN MORE CRITICAL QUESTION OUR APPROACH TO GOM RE TRA RAISED MEXICO 10825.

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